

Message Text

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SUBJ: ANNUAL MEETING OF CNTU

REF: OTTAWA 4142

1. ANNUAL POLICY MEETING IN QUEBEC OF CNTU (CONFEDERATION OF NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS) QUEBEC'S SECOND LARGEST UNION, WITH 165,000 MEMBERS, ENDED OVER WEEKEND. MEETING RESULTED IN DECISION TO ATTEND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC SUMMIT MEETING, INVOLVING REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS, LABOR AND GOVERNMENT, WHICH BEGINS TODAY. QUEBEC'S TWO OTHER LABOR UNIONS, QUEBEC FEDERATION OF LABOR AND QUEBEC TEACHER'S FEDERATION, HAD EARLIER AGREED TO ATTEND SUMMIT MEETING. PARTICIPATION WAS OPPOSED BY PARTY'S LEFT WING, BUT CNTU PRESIDENT NORBERT RODRIGUE TOLD DELEGATES THAT FEDERATION MUST BE PRESENT FOR IT TO REMAIN A CREDIBLE FORCE FOR CHANGE IN QUEBEC SOCIETY.

2. CNTU ALSO SAID IT WOULD PROBABLY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAM ANNOUNCED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON FRIDAY (SEE REFTEL). CNTU SPOKESMAN SAID UNION WOULD ACCEPT MONEY AS LONG AS THERE
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PAGE 02 MONTRE 00823 251322Z

ARE "NO STRINGS ATTACHED". OFFER OF FEDERAL PROGRAM COMES AT OPPORTUNE TIME FOR FINANCIALLY TROUBLED CNTU, WHOSE DELEGATES HAD JUST AUTHORIZED USE OF DOLS 700,000 IN STRIKE FUNDS TO COVER CURRENT OPERATING DEFICIT.

3. CNTU DELEGATES ALSO AUTHORIZED CNTU LEADERS TO ORGANIZE WITH OTHER QUEBEC LABOR FEDERATIONS A ONE HOUR GENERAL STRIKE ON

OCTOBER 14TH, THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS PROGRAM. CNTU VICE PRESIDENT ANDRE L'HEUREUX CRITICIZED CLC FOR PARTICIPATING IN MEETING OF BUSINESS LEADERS AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE POST - CONTROLS PROGRAM. L'HEUREUX SAID CNTU WILL DEMAND ALL LABOR CONTRACTS BE RE-NEGOTIATED WHEN CONTROLS PROGRAM ENDS.

4. PERHAPS MOST INTERESTING DEVELOPMENT DURING MEETING WAS DISCUSSION OF ROLE OF RADICALS IN MEETING OF CNTU, AS UNION HARBORS MILITANTS FROM NUMBER OF RADICAL GROUPS, INCLUDING COMMUNISTS, MAOISTS, TROTSKYITES, AND MARXISTS-LENINISTS. IN SPEECH, CNTU PRESIDENT RODRIGUE DENOUNCED MANNER IN WHICH RADICAL GROUPS ATTEMPTED TO USE UNION TO PROMOTE THEIR OWN POLITICAL GOALS. RESOLUTION ALONG THESE LINES PROPOSED BY UNION EXECUTIVE WAS NOT SUPPORTED, HOWEVER, BY DELEGATES. HARPER

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